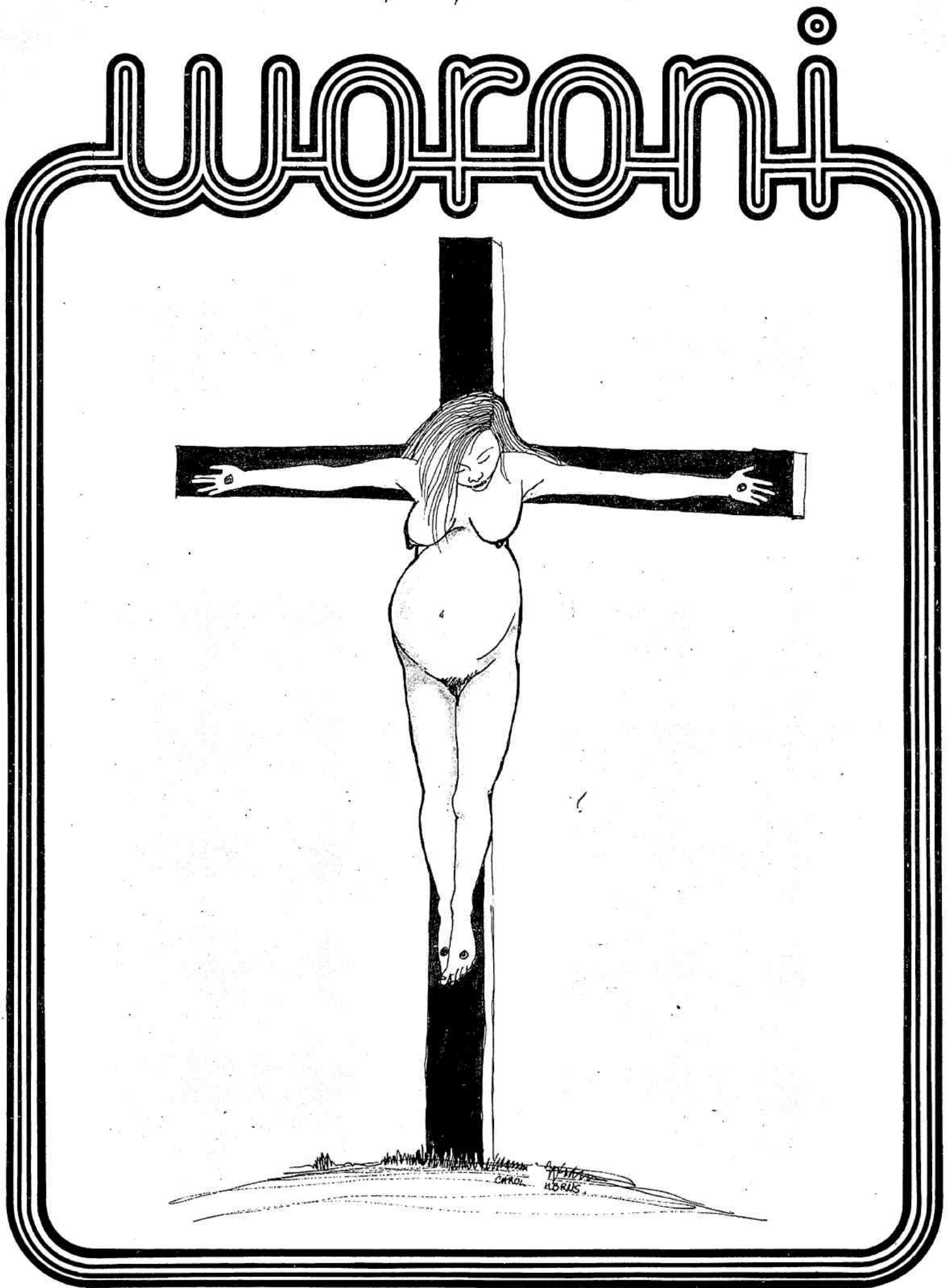


1973, March?



WOMEN'S ISSUE

THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE OF A FEMINIST

My position at University was to an extent unusual, as compared with most women students. In the first place, I was already a feminist before I went there. This meant that I was emphatically career-oriented and that I was conscious even in those dark days of academic and social sexism.

In the second place, I was already in love as an undergraduate: all my emotional interest was centred in one man from the first. This meant that I did not view male students as potential mates or dates — which obviously singled my experience out from that of other women at the University. It also meant that I was free to see men and women alike as potential friends or simply conversationalists.

Intellectually, I found Uni. a great disappointment. I had gone to a school which was academically high-powered and actively encouraged its (all-female) pupils to pursue careers, preferably university-based careers. At the same time, it was considered crass and materialistic to choose a career on a pragmatic basis. Ideally, one should seek knowledge for its own sake and for the pleasure it could bring: if mediaeval Anglo-Norman appealed to you more than Physics, you should choose between them on the basis solely of interest, regardless of future job prospects.

What a cheat! In practice, this propagated the traditional syndrome of women flooding the non-career faculties (notably arts). Even within those faculties, they predominated in the non-occupational subjects — anthropology, archaeology, languages. Most such subjects are not even suited to secondary teaching, one of the traditional repositories for women with "general arts" degrees of no great academic distinction.

In fact, University was and is largely a degree factory: the disinterested pursuit of knowledge is a luxury which one can indulge, if at all, only incidentally. One is reminded that the primary, immediate goal must always be to succeed in examinations and term-work. I was soon disillusioned in this respect, and attempted consciously to retain my earlier intellectual goals while simultaneously pursuing the quite unrelated goal of academic achievement.

At the same time I was aware of the considerable contempt manifested in academic and sub-academic terminology for women in the University — especially for women who did pursue non-occupational subjects. The expression "arty bird" was thrown around a great deal: some very funny man wrote about the arty birds doing "Marriage I": English I, Anthropology I and Psychology I.

Surely there were as many meatheaded college types in houndstooth jackets doing "Rowing I" or even "Drinking and Chundering I"! Plenty of men destined for the family business or some other non-degree job went to University for a year or so without a scholarship, with little intention of doing anything other than enjoy themselves. I'm not really knocking this (although I admit I would have done so as a more censorious — and pretentious — undergraduate). But the assumption that it was always and only women who were frivolous in their attitude to University was demonstrably unjust. It was simply that women as such are a traditional butt of humour, and they must be equally funny as serious intellectuals or as honest good-time girls.

Women were, of course, encouraged not to be serious about their work by a variety of subtle pressures. They should be sweet young things who dimpled at lunch-time discussions instead of arguing coherently (i.e. "being aggressive"). I confess to having yielded to this social pressure by my second year: vocal enough in seminars, I lapsed into dishonest "Oh, really" 's and "How beaut" 's in many a casual conversation with some oaf who was determined to bellow out his ill-informed views on an "intellectual" topic he chose as a display vehicle all his own.

More confessions: I mentally divided men for conversational purposes into two groups. The first group comprised the above type — too dumb and/or opinionated for me to take seriously, and therefore to be treated with the uniform sweetness which masked my (admittedly priggish) contempt. The second type were those I considered worth talking to on any serious level. It was not a distinction based purely on I.Q. Many intelligent men were of the blah-blah type all too prominent amongst intellectuals and would never have let a woman get a word in even if she thought it was worth it to try.

The disappointing thing about men in my second group — i.e. the reasonably acceptable ones, in my terms — was that they were as sexist as any others. It was common for them to accept very bright women as their equals — honorary men, as it were — for purposes of literary discussion etc. When, however, it came to personal relationships or social patter they were awful. They expected their (beautiful, of course) women to make the tea and the bed during or after the high-flown conversations.

They were as quick as any on the sexual double-standard, eager to regale you with malicious gossip about one of your best friends who had had the hide to sleep with three men in one year or — worse — actually to take the sexual initiative with a man. They were as ready with truisms about women and what sort of



"creatures" they were (strange, silly, pathetic, lovable etc.). The only difference was a certain Lawrentian style common in the discourse of literary types ("the sort of women who drags you down into the primeval darkness of her womb", etc. etc. *ad nauseam*). Needless to say, such aphorisms were never two-sided. Sex, and to a much lesser extent race (in the sense of anti-migrant, not anti-black ethnocentrism) were the only areas in which the standard bourgeois clichés of the outside world were acceptable.

In general, I found University rewarding — largely because I was determined to make it so. Nonetheless, it was disappointing in many respects: intellectually, most of the real dividends were extra curricular if not anti-curricular. I hope I haven't put anybody off by stressing the negative side. I would like to think this would strengthen your resolve to improve things and get a lot out of University even in spite of University itself.

Moreover, many things have changed since my day. Student power and the women's movement may not have changed the set-up in a practical way, but they have certainly improved the general climate. I hope in particular that women students will seek true personal fulfilment, freer now from the intellectual, emot-

ional and sexual stereotypes laid down for them in the past by men.

If women really do want a career, they must think in those terms and plan accordingly. If you find the whole system too competitive and unpleasant, fair enough: but beware of the motives which lead you to what is in effect a conclusion

(could you, in other words, be rationalizing the traditional feminine cop-out?) If you want University to be a broadening and exciting experience, you can make it so, in spite of any disillusionments on the way.

Suzanne Wills.
February 1973



gay lib:

GAY WOMEN UNITE!!

Melbourne Gay Women's Group is holding a NATIONAL RADICAL LESBIANS CONFERENCE, Melbourne, June 22-24.

To discuss Sexism and feminism.

To establish a theory of Radical Lesbianism relevant to the Australian Feminist Movement.

Contact: Chris & Sue
78 Kern Street,
Fitzroy 3065

CELL ONE

The group which tripped so gaily away from the already existing homosexual liberation group — ex-Camp, now Gay Lib. but showing few similarities to others of those names — has had its first meeting and does indeed seem to supply at the very least a viable alternative for the thinking gay (actually it provides the only group where the gay interested in liberation rather than just freer socializing can meet others similarly inclined).

It is of particular interest to women in that it is run on unstructured lines similar to those in Women's Liberation — but even more consciously egalitarian — and the membership is mainly female. The latter is no doubt a reflection on just who in the old, dare I say 'parent?', group were thinking. It is intended that the group remain quite small, as one of the problems of most Liberation groups is that they grow unwieldy and demand some form of domination to operate successfully. To ensure that the group can grow without this problem, it has been decided that when a predetermined size is reached, part will split off to form (presumably) Cell Two. The intentions of Cell One — besides being entirely honourable — include the discussion of theoretical implications of being homosexual in our present society, the development of ideas and actions to bring about a more desirable socio-political structure and the fuller realization by the members of what being gay — male and female — means.

A Cell One Scribe.

GAY CAMP Adelaide May 11-19

C.A.M.P. Conference - group meetings, workshops, films, reviews, socials.

Ourselves together to learn from each other how best to confront the straight world.

How to develop ourselves, free from sex roles and oppression.

— enrolment \$2
— contact Helen

150 Stanley St.,
Nth Adelaide.

Gay Lib has existed on campus for nearly two months now, but as far as women are concerned it may just as well not bother. With weekly attendances of about 25, the female component has been two or three and the simple answer that there are fewer women than men on campus is just not adequate. To begin with about half the people attending are off-campus to some extent, and then women aren't that outnumbered anyway.

I see no reason to doubt the existence of a significant number of lesbians at ANU - statistically one can assume 1/20% of the female population — so one is left wondering why so many are left crouching in the closet or disdaining contact. The possible reasons for this can be divided into three groups — fear, disinterest (both of which can apply to men as well) and the different sexual nature of women.

As a woman may remain passive while fucking, or fake like hell, she may conceal from everyone, even herself, that she is homosexual. She has so many myths (ancient and modern) and "facts" of various deviations and truthfulness to explain her disinterest — it takes time for a woman to become accustomed to the act, let alone enjoy it; a certain percentage of women are 'destined' always to be frigid; she hasn't yet met Mr. Right.

Though it is popular to disregard, or even doubt, the existence of virgins on campus, it is likely that about 20% of university women fall into, or sit cross-legged in, this category. If they are eschewing all or most sexual activity and are conducting their relationships with men on 'just good friends' lines, they may be completely unaware that their sexual bent is bent, as it were. This is particularly so since many such females move in tight groups of girls who are all great and close friends, or have just one very good friend. Nothing decrees that a homosexual relationship need be explicitly a sexual one but it is unlikely that anyone will go to a Gay Lib meeting if they've never had any sexual experiences.

There is somewhat of an exception to this in the people — usually women — who turn up saying, "Well basically I'm bisexual", meaning they fuck the opposite sex and fancy they'd be OK with their own. The whole bisexual question is germane to the initial problem. Again as women can fuck without being aroused by their sexual partner, it is easier for a woman to be bisexual than it is for a man and as it is quite fashionable to be bi- these days a woman can enjoy herself with other women yet be able to assure others, and herself, that she is not really gay, just swinging.



Yet if she went to a Gay Lib meeting, unless she proclaimed every half hour or so that she was bi- it would be tantamount to admitting to being gay to all present, but more importantly to herself. Militating against this is not only the painful process of admitting self-deception and accepting social disapproval/disgust/rejection but also the fact that the gay women's world lacks the 'glamour' of the gay guy's scene.

There is no doubt that a number of gay guys are quite hostile to women and this may have led some lesbians to think that they would be very unwelcome. Gay Lib is popularly regarded as a men's thing but after all the populace at large rarely concedes the existence of female homosexuality anyway. There is no reason for a radical Liberation group to reflect the straight world where mixed organizations are overwhelming male — either in number or power centres.

Other reasons may exist in a number of suppositions about lesbians which have been neither proved/disproved nor investigated. Does she, for instance, have less need to cruise, to pick up a partner, and therefore tend to avoid camp contact? Does she become aware of her 'true self' later on average than the male does? Does the double oppression of being a woman and being a homosexual tell so much on the lesbian that she stays home and inside?

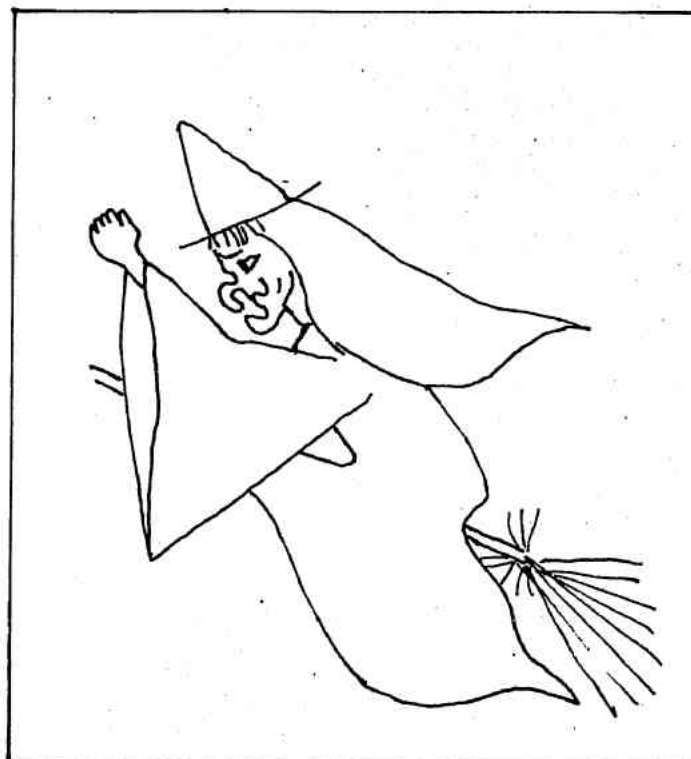
This has been a questioning article, one seeking a reason and by its very nature unable to say specifically this is why. It is difficult to prescribe action to correct the imbalance. A solely lesbian group could be formed or more active propagandising among women could be attempted. One prob-

lem with the latter is that most women attending Gay Lib are not full-time students. This generally means that they are Public Servants with the resultant worries about losing their jobs or chances of promotion were their sexual proclivities to become known through publicity attempts. Gay Lib is for women, who need not play a subsidiary role within it, who need not fear being put down because they are lesbians, and who want a better world where being gay matters no more than having blue eyes.

Frances.

Afterword: Since first writing

this article, a split has occurred within Gay Lib which has siphoned off most of the few women. One reason for female absences from the original group that I didn't mention was that it demanded real dedication/masochism to return after one meeting. The triviality, ignorance of small group dynamics and unstructured 'organizations' and the emphasis on primarily male problems (dealing with cops and the various beats) doesn't encourage whatever the meeting attendance equivalent of recidivism is. The breakaway group's interest are more serious, political and theoretical so it is hoped that this will be a more satisfactory group.



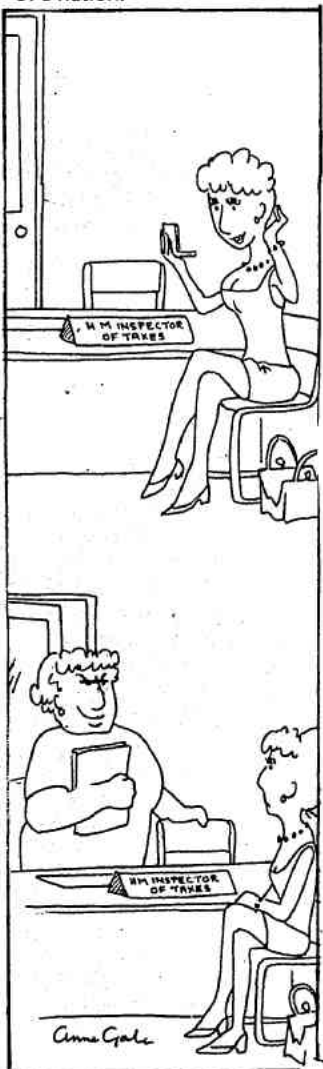
Jesus was conceived by God and a woman: man had nothing to do with it.

The trouble is being a sex object can be quite gratifying. Disguised behind the make-up and the sexy clothes a woman feels more confident; she gets the pick of the men and eyes, both male and female, stare at her in admiration or envy. Her pretty face, attractive legs, and shapely body earn her all kinds of perks: immediate assistance from a passing male should her car break down in the road; understanding and sympathy from her tutor when handing in an essay 'n' days late; a feeling of superiority when a host of males chivalrously stand back to let her through a door first etc. Although she has to suffer the "agonies" of courtship:-

"I wish I'd been born a man," I said to Vic when I heard him telling mum he wouldn't be home until late because he was taking a new bird out. I thought how easy it was for them — just deciding who to chase and then chasing. How different for me, waiting, or trying not to wait, by the telephone wondering whether it would ever ring."

(Short story from *Woman's Day*, April 30, 1973)

the prospect of marriage, bringing with it the protection, love and security she so much desires, shines with a green light just ahead of her. After all, her husband promises to love and cherish her til death do them part, so as soon as the babies start to arrive she has the choice of giving up her job and living off his earnings for the rest of her life — that is, if she manages to keep her feminine charm and doesn't lose him to a younger woman. "Sacred motherhood" is a further gratification: only she can bear the child and feed it with her own milk; it is her body which produces and rears the future leaders and workers of a nation.



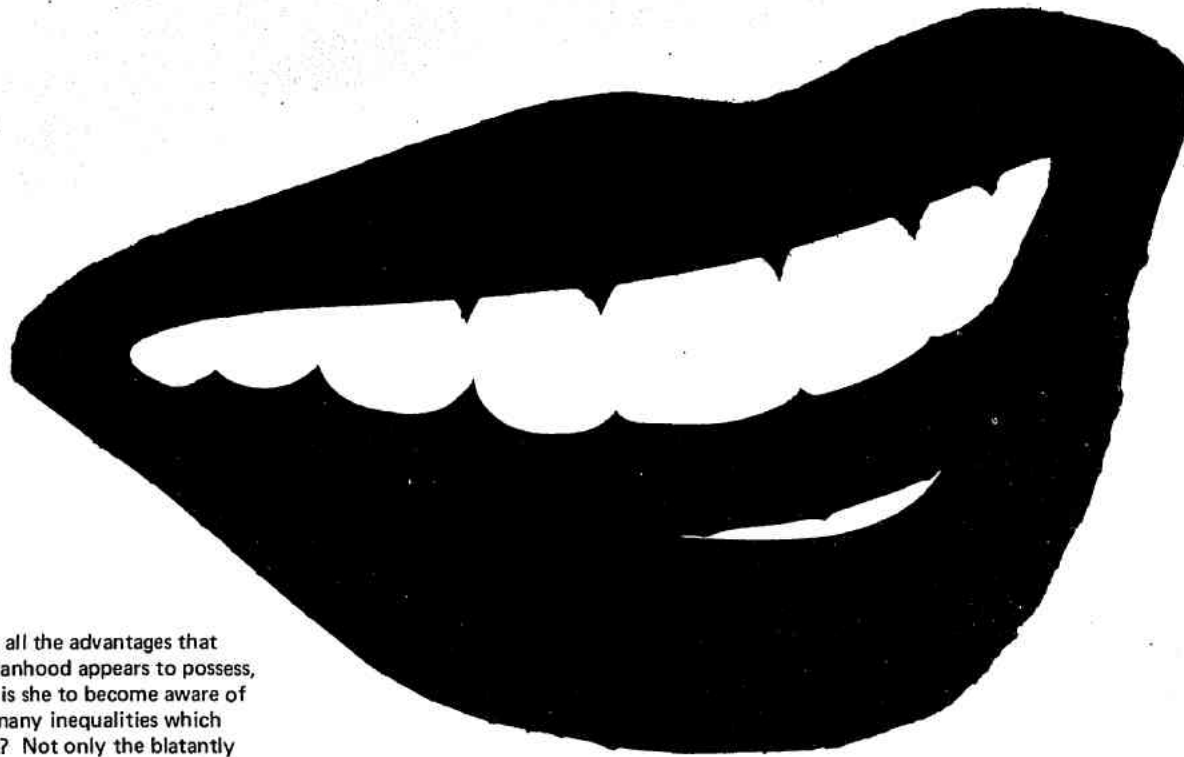
With all the advantages that womanhood appears to possess, how is she to become aware of the many inequalities which exist? Not only the blatantly obvious ones like unequal pay and unwanted pregnancies but also the subtle ones which are far more insidious, such as the exploitation of her body through films, advertising, the popular media, and on a personal level in her sexual relations with men, where the male will satisfy his sexual urge often at the expense of her discomfort and resentment, accusing her of frigidity when really trying to conceal his selfish or clumsy performance.

Woman's position has rarely been questioned before because her oppression has been accepted so universally. This gives the theory of innate inferiority a strong footing. She is physically weaker, has never dominated politically, culturally or creatively, so it would seem a logical conclusion that she must be genetically less capable in those fields than the male. A further and more distressing conclusion which some men, and women too, arrive at, is that women are less intelligent than men. Even in the progressive sex-education film 'Growing Up' in which masturbation and sexual intercourse were screened and explained in some detail, the following statement was made:- "While women give birth to babies, men give birth to new ideas."

Any belief in woman's innate inferiority is slowly being undermined by the increasing number of women pursuing further education and breaking into professions formerly believed to be the sole prerogative of men. However, the number of women who actually manage to reach the higher echelons in their chosen profession is still very small, largely because of child-bearing. If a woman is devoted to her career and still wants a family, the pressures against her being able to combine the two are enormous — maternity leave is necessary but promotion is often lost when she returns to work, child-minding facilities are few and far between — and anyway who ever heard of a good mother letting "other people" bring up her own children? On the other hand, the career woman' (almost a dirty word) who chose to forsake the

bearing of children in order to progress in her career is regarded as a freak or lesbian; up to now the childless middle-aged woman has always been nothing but barren, with all its connotations of shame and humiliation. Since the advent of the pill and other reliable contraceptives it has now become possible for all women to make a positive decision about whether or not they actually want children and a tiny minority are in fact opting out of the childbearing-sacred-motherhood-precious-milk role altogether. However it is undeniably true that most women feel a conditioned urge, or an innate instinct, call it what you will, to have children — are they to be denied a useful career simply because it is automatically and unjustifiably taken for granted that the upbringing of children is the woman's job?

This situation will certainly be perpetuated if employers persist in prejudices which were true in the past — that a single woman employee is bound to get married, that a married woman is bound to get pregnant, and a working mother will be under stress and therefore doing her job inefficiently. Her maternal instinct, physical weakness etc. still serve as excuses for sexual division of labour, excuses which are fallacious in the modern world. It should no longer be necessary for one person to have to suffer the frustration and (unpaid) monotony that housework produces. Some men are slowly realising that these chores are no more fitted to a female than a male. The same applies to childrearing — it is in fact a great shame that men are alienated from their children because of their lack of contact with them. If they ceased to consider childrearing as a sex role, something beneath them, and shared their daily upbringing with the mother, the result would almost certainly be an improvement in total family relationships, because it would begin to destroy the image of the single authority to be feared in the family unit. It is still questionable whether a satisfactory outcome can be achieved while society's basic social



BUT

unit is the nuclear family, but this would at least be a step in the direction towards the breaking down of the 'old order'.

But why don't all women feel that they are being exploited? Many would say that they are completely free but this is on a purely personal, individual level (e.g. the husband helps in the house, gives her a good allowance and the free choice of returning to work etc). They seem to be unaware of the exploitation of WOMAN in general. Millions are made each year by the exploitation of woman's naked body. Full female frontal in any film is bound to draw the crowds in but how often is the naked male seen on stage or in films? Very rarely, and is this due to the male actor's inhibitions or because the male director does not care to see a mirror-image of his penis in "color by Technicolor" on the wide-angle screen?

Advertising appears to be slightly more subtle, in that only partial views of the naked female body are portrayed, but the implicit sexual connotations are even more insidious. Sex in the form of the

female body is used to sell almost anything, eg. the simple act of having a bath is projected by the advertiser into a fantasy of love and romance, "Anything can happen after a Badedas bath". From early adolescence females become accustomed to seeing their body used in the sexual sell and this conditioning results in their feeling no revolt; in fact they respond very tamely

to the fantasy image projected, and even try to live up to it. She will try to give herself "a new look with Rimmel", tint her hair so that it is left "so soft and natural it looks like it belongs", buy the new bra which "feels fabulous" (to whom?) or thank "Genevieve Sheer to the waist party hose, you helped me get my man." Women are conditioned to feel ashamed of their real selves, they must deodorise any natural odour replacing it with a fragrance common to fifty thousand other women; many feel that they cannot be seen until they have "put their face on", whether it be the child-like, the "natural", or the society woman's face, according to the dictates of fashion. The obsession with her looks is so difficult to reject because she is conditioned from such an early age to regard them as being essential. The little girl learns



that a pair of shoes or a ribbon in her hair will make her pretty, clothes are manufactured to make her look "just like mummy" and "grown up". As she grows older she learns to use her artificially aided good looks to her advantage. Unfortunately this falseness often pervades her relationships with men — she must not show how much she loves him, or she might lose him, she can put on 'the little girl act' if she wants something from him etc.

Women are only just beginning to realise how degrading it all is, not only being treated according to how her looks please men, but also being transformed into a passive artificial object. Awareness of the situation has caused some women to demand to be treated as human beings rather than as "chicks", "dollybirds" or "sheilas", whose education does not matter as much as her brother's because she'll just get married and raise a family. However these women are deviating from the norm expected of them.

It remains that those who are becoming conscious of their oppression and fight against it, are looking forward to a society which has never before existed — one of mutual respect between men and women. Some sub-cultures within our society have achieved a relative degree of liberation, such as communes and universities. But these serve as a miserable yardstick for gauging the ground we still have to cover. Although it is acceptable there for woman to regard sex as enjoyable and permissible to her, she is nevertheless still regarded as an "easy lay" if she sleeps with every male she feels like, whereas he is a lucky guy if

LIKE

her succeeds in this. Sadly the concept of using a girl just for sex is still prevalent. This will die hard even in universities where females, especially attractive ones find their sex so useful. It earns them help and advice from the predominantly male staff who are as susceptible as any to the stunning female student. Being a woman really does seem to pay off in these circumstances, and at the same time reinforces the idea that a woman's appearance is her most important attribute.

However a university is a very privileged and somewhat exclusive environment in which sexual distinctions are gradually becoming rarer, and women have far more freedom in the life style they choose. But these women are not in the least bit representative of the silent majority, the millions of women who don't understand their frustrations and alienation, who are so conditioned that they are unaware that they are playing the roles projected by convention and the media: the loving, sensible, safe but dull mother, the imaginative but thrifty cook,

THE CHILDLESS WOMAN

Women are taught to believe they want to have children right from their earliest childhood. They are handed dolls as practise babies and given houses in which to place these dolls. They are told that what they really want for presents at birthdays, etc... are these dolls, because little girls love playing with dolls. If they do as mummy and daddy say they too will grow up to be mummies. As they grow any interest that they show in smaller children is encouraged. "Jane is so good with children", says one proud mother to another, "she loves looking after the little ones". So effective is this socialisation that one rarely comes across people who don't seem to have the belief that at some stage in their lives all women will want to have babies.

You try telling anyone you never want to have children and see how very condescending they suddenly become.

"You may say that now, dear,

but in a few years time....." After all, any woman who doesn't want to have children is unnatural. Sooner or later, the biological urge will creep up on you (when you're least expecting it) and you'll be crying out to have babies all over the place. Women are supposed to feel great lumps of emotion when they emotional rashes or something; want to go off and produce their own personalized versions which they can mould into whatever shape they wish. Personally I find babies as interesting as a lump of shit. Oh, but you say, you can't be uninterested in babies because, after all, they're human beings. This argument implies that women not wanting children must be inhuman because they are rejecting part of humanity. But do people decry men as being inhuman because they do not want to have children, or do not coo over little babies? No, because men's accepted dealing with the other human beings are with adults - children do not belong to their sphere of existence except in a very minor way.

the attractive but faithful wife. They may feel aware of the unfairness at a personal level — "Why is it me who is left with the kids when my husband deserts me?" "Why should I earn less money for the same work?", but do not connect this with the need for a movement towards the total freedom of all women. Very few of this generation's women will ever be stirred to strive for the unleashing of sex-role chains. The only solution we can envisage lies in the education of the young.

The first step will be complete desegregation of schools — after all single-sex schools are a breeding ground for prejudice and fear of the opposite sex. The struggle for normal relationships is hard enough to achieve in some coeducational schools where old-fashioned teachers insist on dividing the girls from the boys — whose minds would otherwise stray from the serious business of education!

All outdated schoolbooks which reinforce the sex role image must be banned. This sexism is particularly prevalent in primary schools where children form reading habits and simultaneously accept that the boy helps daddy with the car and the girl helps mummy in the kitchen. Their reading books contain sentences such as:

"Where is mummy?
Mummy is in the kitchen.
What is mummy doing?
Mummy is doing the cooking.
Where is daddy?
Daddy is at work, earning the money to buy the food."

At secondary school level this division is taken a stage further by the introduction of subjects exclusive to one sex e.g. home economics, woodwork, metalwork etc. and even the old superstition that boys are better at maths and science and girls better at Arts still survives. These barriers must be broken down in order to give all children

BEING A



"I don't suppose it has ever occurred to you that I might prefer 'pale and interesting' to 'big and strong'."

as wide an educational choice as possible.

Finally the question of sex education rears its ugly head. Until fairly recently children have gleaned their fragmentary knowledge of the 'facts of life' from friends, magazines and occasionally parents. The result has been inadequate and therefore dangerous knowledge and the belief that sex is something dirty or shameful. The school has now assumed the parental role in this area but still teaches with a strong bias towards morals they consider to be involved, basically:

Why is it that people don't believe you when you say you don't want to have children? They are much readier to accept the proposition that you don't intend getting married if you are female than the one that you don't want children. After all, in this enlightened society you can have children out of wedlock and still retain your basic female role. People are readier to accept that marriage is a socially induced phenomenon than the idea that the bearing of children is also a socially induced phenomenon.

Doctors have the same prejudices about women's overriding biological urges to bear children as everyone else. Sterilisation is something which exists for the woman who has had three children. The woman who wants to have no children at all better stay on some form of contraception until she becomes so aged that it is quite obvious that she is serious about never wanting to have children.

Doctors seem to think that if they sterilize a young child less woman she is going to come back to them when she is older saying she has changed her mind and wants to have children after all. After all how can they

sterilize a woman when she isn't even aware of her own desires? (It's her body which dictates them, not her mind.)

Women who do not wish to have children are seen as not only being biologically unnatural but also as being selfish. Society tries to make women feel guilty about not wanting to have children.

The desire not to have children indicates that she is living only for herself and not for others as she should be. She is not the service unit she was meant to be socialized into being. Mind you, males also get harassed about producing grandsons for their families, but this is not seen as being their primary function in life and the most important thing that they can possibly do for humanity.

The two main criteria by which women are often identified in society are often their males and their children. Thus the proverbial female chit chat about how Johnny is getting along at school and Sarah had started walking at such an early age. The myth also includes the idea that without these children the women would be lost. Their reason for existing would cease. Poof!

Jill

this is how to do it, if you do it you may have a baby, and babies should be born into a married family. The topics of VD and contraception are discussed, the former as a reinforcement of the dangers of casual sex, and the latter purely as an aid to married life. Sex education must be more than this. It should be far more all-encompassing, giving genuine information about birth, through to the development of sexuality in childhood, stressing that it is quite natural for children to experiment and find out about one another's bodies, that masturbation is a natural urge, and to indulge in it is not harmful or sinful. Stress should be placed on the need for truthful, honest relationships. All too often male adolescents suffer agonies when trying to conform to the "assertive" role in asking a girl out, risking painful rejection; similarly, convention requires girls to restrain their natural feelings and forces them into a passive "waiting" role, where they must never betray their feelings and even in the relationship she cannot afford to be truthful for fear of frightening him off.

Homosexuality is a further relationship which needs to be discussed and not swept under the carpet in case the students minds are corrupted. There is a need for more enlightened attitudes towards people hitherto regarded as sexual deviants or queers.

So children should be awakened to all aspects of sexism and made aware that it exists

as much as racism. The concept of sexism is still at the embryonic stage and exists in much the same way as the concept of racism did twenty or thirty years ago. (At tertiary level the study of sexism could be incorporated into sociology courses as racism is now.) Even the Little Red Schoolbook which was a breath of fresh air in stuffy schoolroom sanctuaries is guilty of sexism — instructions on sexual intercourse and masturbation are for the benefit of boys, not girls.

If these sexist notions still prevail in progressive literature and films intended to enlighten and expand the minds of children, will we ever reach a total equality of the sexes? As optimists we hope so, because education, even as it exists now, has managed to produce a minority of people who see through their conditioning and are trying to change it. Group cohesion is the only effective method of social change, and at last women's movements are gaining momentum and though surrounded by publicity which is often derisive are at least making people conscious of the unrest and dissatisfaction caused by this inequality. We are looking forward to liberation and the real enjoyment of being a woman, a time when both men and women will benefit by being allowed to be their real selves, rather than accepting the roles previously laid out for them.

Jacki Childs & Dee Yorke.

WOMAN

womens liberation on campus

Once again the campus WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP has seen a miraculous falling off in interest from the first meeting of the year, which was well attended and by all accounts successful, to the last meeting but one, which was called to discuss the role of Women's Liberation on campus and was attended by about eight people who couldn't sustain enough interest to keep the discussion going for longer than about ten minutes. In fact, I think the fact that I was too bored with Women's Liberation on campus to write this article is typical of the attitude of many who were once active in this organization. I think it is necessary to blame the organisation we have created for this general malaise, rather than blame the individuals—interest is not lacking, and the ideal of people's liberation is by no means dead among radical feminists at the ANU, it is rather that many no longer see the point of the organisation. In short it seems to have achieved very little in the past towards

raising the consciousness of women (in particular) on campus, and this lack of success has led to general disillusionment.

One of the reasons for the non-dynamic nature of campus Women's Liberation in the past may have been that there was very little disagreement among participants over the principles of women's liberation. Consciousness-raising has been seen as a process of growth, during which one moves in logical progression from the rejection of bras etc. and rejection of the female role in the dating process, through abortion on demand and free child care centres to the belief that revolution is the only way to rid society of the evils of sexism. This belief that the attainment of a 'true' feminist consciousness is only a matter of time has led to divisions in the campus group between those of us who believe we are beyond the

stage of rejecting the external trappings of a male-dominated society, and those who have recently begun to question the morals of society. The belief in the growth process in the attainment of a radical feminist consciousness leads to a reluctance on the part of the 'older' group to criticize these others, while at the same time they feel that the discussions of campus Women's Liberation groups have little or nothing to offer them. Thus their lack of

enthusiasm leads to the newer group of feminists becoming frustrated with the group and blaming lack of organisation for the failure of Women's Lib. to attract more people. The fact that the ideology of radical feminism does not progress beyond a certain point among campus womens libbers may also be responsible for the lack of vitality of its members.

There is a feeling that everything has been said that can be said.

If this is true, then the only differences of opinion between women in the campus group can occur over what action should be taken to carry out the generally accepted aim of raising the feminist consciousness of women. And in fact, most differences of opinion that I can recall have involved whether men should be allowed to attend womens lib. meetings, whether street theatre ever achieves anything which would make the effort worth while, and whether the group should concentrate on large meetings or on smaller 'rap' groups. I think this is the most important disagreement, and that organizing various actions must now be the main reason for the existence of Womens Liberation as an organization on campus. It has been seen that our large meetings achieve little in the direction of consciousness-raising, and in any case, I would question whether the raising of our own individual consciousnesses should take up as much of the groups time as it has in the past.

Judy Turner



too bad about judy

"Seven Little Australians" is a book for girls, first published in 1894 and has had Thirty-nine editions since then. According to the cover blurb it has "become an Australian Classic". It is, then a book of long-standing popularity. It is also a tear jerker of the first order. I may be soft hearted but even now on re-reading these last tragic pages I find myself in tears. One would not expect a book of this kind, one which conjures up "to many mothers and grandmothers happy memories" a women's lib theme. One would hardly expect such an accepted book to contain a deep dissatisfaction with the social order and the role of women. Yet even as Freud found a deeper subconscious relevance in the Greek tragedies so some similar relevance might be found in this book. To look for further justification for such an approach a person of intellectual interests might turn to Marcuse's "One Dimensional Man" in which he propounds the view that literature often transcends the present social order to present new possibilities for liberating mankind. Such a popular tragedy would have to be about some fundamental tragedy of the restriction of human self-realization in this society.

The heroine of the story is Judy, though the other Seven little Australians are important. Judy is a picture of women's liberation in a fourteen year old. "Judy, I think, was never seen to work, and seldom looked picturesque. If she did not dash madly to the place she wished to get to, she would progress by a series of jumps, bounds and odd little skips. She was very thin, as people generally are who have quicksilver instead of blood in their veins; she had a small eager freckled face, with very bright dark eyes, a small determined

mouth, and a mane of untidy, curly black hair that was the trial of her life." She is the most intelligent of the children and has the greatest ability to organize the others into ceaseless scrapes and take the blame for these. Not only does she break through the sex roles in this general way by being articulate, clever, organizing. She is shown doing quite specific acts of role breaking. The first of these is to mow the lawn with a scythe which she did "excellently well". Later she escaped from school, catches the train to Blackheath and walks from there back to Sydney, a distance of seventy or so miles, getting food from farmhouses on the way".

Briefly, what happens to her is this. She is forced to go to a boarding school by her father who is worried about her unladylike ways. She escapes and on the trip home contracts consumption. The implication is that a girl is not physically strong enough to undertake such a journey. Her consumption is discovered when she is surprised by her father from whom she has been hiding. She is, from then on, of course, a much weaker girl and is physically unable to get up to any unladylike high-jinks.

Towards the end of the book she is on a picnic with the others dashes forwards to save the baby from a falling tree, is herself crushed and dies slowly. The heroine of the story is killed at thirteen.

Throughout the story it is the father who is responsible for stifling Judy and for bringing about her death. To begin with he sends her away to boarding school to make a lady of her. "He said, it would be the making of her. It was an excellent school he had chosen for her, the ladies who

kept it were very kind, but very firm, and Judy was being ruined for want of a firm hand". This is seen by all, including Judy as being as bad as sent to the gallows. "Judy was as white as death, and utterly limp". The Captain (the father is a captain) admonishes "one would think I was going to take the child to be hanged". Disliking the school she escapes, returning home on foot and thoroughly exhausting herself in the process. When she arrives home she is "tall, gaunt, strange-looking". Her clothes and boots were worn out, "her brown face was thin and sharp, and her hair matted and rough". She tries to hide from her father. He eventually finds her in the loft. Again he is pictured as responsible for her illness. He speaks to her angrily and says "I shall take precautions to have you watched at school since you cannot be trusted. You will not return home for the Christmas holidays and probably not for those of the following June. It was as bad as a sentence of death". Again there is a metaphorical use of the idea that the Captain is sending her to death. He is. Judy coughs — "a paroxysm that shook her thin frame and made her gasp for breath". She covered her mouth with her handkerchief and when she removes it "the handkerchief that the child had taken from her lips had scarlet, horrible spots staining its whiteness".

Despite the fact that the Captain is so clearly presented as killing Judy he is not seen as a bad man personally but even acting in Judy's best interests as he sees them. The point is that the society lays down Judy's best interests in such a way that by following them the Captain causes her death. He feels that Judy's life is leading in a dangerous direction but he

does not know how to stop her. The "restless fire" in Judy would either "make a noble, daring, brilliant woman of her, or else she would be shipwrecked on rocks the others would never come to, and it would flame up, higher and higher and consume her". Later he remarks to himself that "There will be no end to my trouble with her as she grows older". The Captain sees his duty as turning Judy into a proper woman. It is by doing this that the Captain kills her. The author sees Judy's remarkable vitality and energy as a truly fatal flaw in the social context she has described and the Captain, though a part of this society, is not really responsible for it.

The startling denouement of our in depth analysis is at hand. The book works on two levels. Its ostensible tragedy is that Judy, by a series of misfortunes dies young and never lives to fulfil the promise of her early vitality. It is however the real tragedy of the book that a person with a spirit like Judy's could never conduct herself like a proper woman. Judy's personality had to be killed at thirteen lest she be "shipwrecked on the rocks" of social ostracism and isolation. The military father as the representative of the patriarchal society is the agent by which this takes place both in the metaphor of consumption and death and in the reality of boarding school.

The real theme of the book is worked out as well in the sexual symbolism which the discerning reader can discover. Judy's punishment for her unladylike ways is consumption brought on by her father's agency. She spits blood on to her white handkerchief. This may be taken as menstrual bleeding — this is the weakening curse which cuts down thirteen to

fourteen year old girls and starts them on the path to ladylike behaviour. Alternatively we may see Judy as being deflowered by the Captain. She undergoes a "paroxysm" that shakes her and makes her gasp for breath. It lasts two to three minutes. Either way the subconscious argument is that undergoing sexual relations with men, and preparing oneself for this kills the spirit in girls. The same subconscious theme is evident in the form her death takes. When she dies she is looking after a baby known as the General — "There was a tree falling, one of the great gaunt naked things that had been ringbarked long ago". Judy rushes to save the General and is killed herself. The huge tree is a mighty phallus which kills adolescent girls. Judy is killed while carrying out the duties of a woman. She dies to save a male child.

It is clear then that the tragedy of the Seven Little Australians is not just a particular series of accidents happening to a particular girl but is more generally the tragedy of adolescent girls dying in droves in their spirit, in their will to be independent. This universality is what has made the book so popular. Whether mothers and daughters have cried over Judy's death and become reconciled to their own — have been warned of the penalty of independence — or whether they have absorbed and gloried secretly in the message that it is better to die than to grow up in womanhood is unclear. The social effect of a book like this probably depends on the situation of the reader. However that what the book depicts is a social tragedy is its unambiguous message.

Sisters in struggle;
Kitty and Nancy, AMAZONS

CONT.

Obviously, if no improvement can be made by us on what we see as the ideology of radical feminism, the only way we can hope to stay together is by developing a new line of action. To me the only possible way is to move towards a more united front with more conservative women's groups like WEL and the abortion law reform associations, and to involve ourselves in action—like organizing forums or speeches on the problems of women in our society at other higher educational institutions, at schools if possible, at large department stores (?), in public service eating places etc etc. Such action would aim to get more and more women involved in organizations of all sorts—the more the merrier. No matter how conservative and limited the aims of these organizations may be, I believe nothing but good can come from our

sisters organizing themselves and developing a feeling of solidarity, from which could grow a greater devotion to the liberation of women in particular and all people. After all, to plagiarize from a well-known social theorist, from action comes the growth of consciousness, and this applies as much to women, in fact much more to us, who have been encouraged to be divided among ourselves for so long, than to the working classes.

If Women's Liberation is to continue in organized form on campus, some sort of drastic reform of its aims will be necessary. Perhaps the above suggestion—to concentrate more on involving other women in the movement than on our own consciousness—will do the trick.

Judy Turner.



Are You Standing On Your Own Two Feet?

ON LIBERATION

When I was sixteen I wrote an article for the school newsletter called 'The Case for Promiscuity' or 'Too much of a good thing can be wonderful: Mae West'. It was in answer to one by a boy called 'The Case for Chastity' which said that man's ability to control sexual desire by intellect was what distinguished him from the animals, and this was how a boy should show respectful love for a girl. (No consideration of whether the girl wanted respectful love.) I was defending the sort of behaviour that was called promiscuous then, that of fucking someone without having the intention of marrying them. Real promiscuity—desperately fucking all and sundry—seems sad rather than morally reprehensible. My answer was that intellect has no place in sex and love, since by definition they are not cold blooded. Provided contraception was used to prevent unwanted children why become needlessly frustrated? Given that teenagers experience emotional love, physical sex is inevitable and we should not feel guilty about it.

The school authorities refused to print it, why I don't know—the content was hardly offensive and I doubt that a charge of 'inciting to sex' could be sustained against it. Possibly they found it shocking

that a 'nice' girl was able and willing to discuss sex, but mainly I think they were reluctant to acknowledge the sexuality and sexual activities of the pupils. Perhaps when senior colleges are established discussion of both viewpoints of sex will be acceptable to them, however, I think this will as usual miss the point. It will be only the intelligent middle class pupils who will benefit, if they are able, from the discussion, and those who really need to discuss such things, the fourteen year olds who fuck in Sullivan's Creek at recess, who face pregnancy, an early marriage and a miserable existence as a housewife for the rest of their lives, those to whom Women's Liberation is most relevant and whom it never reaches, will miss out. Liberation should not be a luxury.

However, what I wanted to discuss was one sentence that I wrote: 'Lack of discrimination (genuine mistakes excused) is as inexcusable in sex as in other aspects of life, and it will always debase the sanctity of love.' This statement has a rather touching idealism that I would have cynically rejected a year or so ago, but now I wonder. In the discussion about sexual liberation the opinion seems to be that fucking constitutes liberation. Women I know seem to fuck for the sake of fucking, because it is fashionable and proves them to be liberated. They proudly announce themselves to have sucked off their lovers,

fucked during menstruation and to be bisexual, not because they've enjoyed it at all (if they had, good, and why boast?) but because they seem to think it is expected of them. They've done it, isn't that liberated?

This is a plea for a little discretion and meaningful, or at least fulfilling relationships rather than an appeal to restore some idealized notion of love. Fucking with strangers may be pleasurable (though risky—what if he gets his rocks off strangling people at the point of orgasm?) but I don't think it's what liberation is all about. Surely it reduces men to sex objects, which is the very thing women are complaining of having had done to them for the last umpteen centuries. I expect a lot of people, especially those newly exposed to all these notions of liberation feel this pressure. I think now that it is not that the sanctity of love is debased, but that human integrity is undermined. The combination of sex with love is supposed to be the most beautiful human experience, and I think it is worth holding out for. Sexual liberation for women should not be an obligation to fuck every bloke who suggests it, but the freedom to choose who you would like to fuck, and the freedom to stop fucking them when the relationship, even if it be marriage, is over, and to choose again.

Thea Hackman.

The big prick syndrome

This is the article they said I'd never write. It's the product of many drunken ravings about a subject very close to my heart (or cunt.) I call it the BIG PRICK SYNDROME, or B.P.S. It has been with us for hundreds of years, the myth, dream, "phallacy", whatever, that BIG PRICKS are BEST. It's in the media, in the slang. It's the subject of more jokes and Playboy cartoons than any other.

"Then there was the one about the guy with the big prick. He was fucking a chick and she let out a big fart. When she apologised, he said: 'Don't worry love, they usually shit'."

Apparently that's supposed to be funny. You all know what they say: "Women prefer Big Pricks. Big Pricks Satisfy Best" and if you've got a giant, you've got it made.

Well mate, I'll be fucked if I'm going to sit by any longer and let men say what women like!

After months of raving and talking with my female (and certain male) friends and acquaintances, I have still only met one who prefers large pricks. (She will remain nameless). The rest like small or middle-sized ones.

So all you pricks, especially big ones, get down from your phallic pedestals. The idea that women prefer Big Pricks is a male myth created by ego-tripping, big-cocked men. Unfortunately, the myth has become so well established that for centuries women have not dared openly question it.

But women will be duped no longer!! We will discover our own preferences, big, small or

otherwise, regardless of the fantasies of men!

For myself, give me a small prick any day. They're more exciting, more versatile and much more fun to suck off. With a small prick, it is easier to move, and I hate the feeling of being stuffed up or of choking. Other women or camp men have different opinions, but I know that many agree, especially those with small arsars or cunts. I say that big pricks usually don't make good fucks.

But personal preference in size is secondary to the arrogance of the "well-endowed" male. Too often he suffers from the misapprehension that any woman will automatically have an orgasm if his monster masturbates inside her cunt.

Bullshit!!!!

All you cocky men out there, get it into your thick heads that the cunt is not important in the female orgasm. The clit is the key, the only essential. (All Freudians can go pull themselves). The so-called "vaginal" orgasm depends on the clit originates in the clit and usually requires stimulation of the clit, just as the "clitoral" orgasm.

The prick just doesn't matter. Not only is it usually insufficient



on its own for a good orgasm, it is actually unnecessary. Call me a penis-envying, male hating lesbian who "just needs a good screw", if you like. I say the prick is irrelevant!! Fingers and mouths are much more fun!

Have you heard the one about the two friends drinking at a bar. One said to the other: "How is it that the ugly, little guy over there always has women flocking around him, when they ignore us?" His friend replied: "Maybe it's the way he brushes flies off his nose with his tongue."

So I say to all you men out there, stop measuring your ridiculous cocks and face reality. Remember the clitoris

(though I suspect many men who think they're hot-stuff couldn't even find a clit.) You don't even have to "raise it" to satisfy a woman, just forget the prick and use your mouth.

And I say to all you women, demand satisfaction, just as men have for thousands of years. You are not naturally passive so use your cunt as the grasping, sucking, squeezing, aggressive tool that it really is. You can have more orgasms more often than any man, thanks to the mighty clit, so go get them!

Yours S.P.

(Thanks are due to Gough Whitlam, an unidentified truck driver and numerous other men).



RALLY TO SUPPORT THE BILL FOR ABORTION ON REQUEST

**PARLIAMENT HOUSE LAWNS
WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 12.00-1.30 P.M.
THURSDAY 10 MAY 10.00-1.30 P.M.**

I'M TIRED OF BASTARDS FUCKIN' OVER ME.

When I'm walking down the street
And every man I meet
Says baby aint you sweet
I could scream.
But although those guys are sick
And think only of their pricks,
It aint sweet I feel, I just feel good and mean.

CHORUS:

They whistle for me like a dog
and make noises like a hog
Heaven knows they sure got problems, I agree
But their problems I can't solve
Cos my sanity's involved
And I'm tired of bastards fuckin' over me.

When I'm tryin' to take a walk
And some guy says he wants to talk
And my way proceeds to block,
I get real sore
Cos although I speak real fine
That aint what is on his mind
I'm a pretty piece and he's just tryin' to score.

CHORUS:

When I'm on my way to work
And I'm confronted by some jerk
Who's got some obscene quirk
He must display
Though I know the guy is ill
I can't help but want to kill
Every other man who's standing in my way.

CHORUS:

Now I know that life is rough
And to be a man is tough
But I have had enough
And I can't ignore
That their masculinity just don't respect my right to be
And I solemnly do swear I'm going to war.

CHORUS:

So I sing this song, in hope
That you won't think it's a joke
Cos it's time we all awoke
To take a stand.
We've been victims all our lives
Now it's time to organize
To fight we're going to need each other's hands.

CHORUS:

A FEW MILES FROM MANLY

The first thing I remember about Sydney is the clear blue October sky and I first looked at it on the corner of Pacific Highway and Blues Point Road, where that road starts to wind down to the pier.

I can remember the October air whirling about me: little soft puffs of wind brushed against my cheeks, eddied across my eyelids. It was a lonely wind, but gentle. Everything so round. That great blue bowl of a sky with white clouds standing out like the pattern on a Wedgwood dish. My proud belly a sign of all the newness in and about me. I was my own world.

December. From my bedroom window in the ugly redbrick pub I watched a low red sun bleed across the harbour. Out on the verandah, painted a vanilla green, no air stirred. Hot, hot Australian bearing down on me. Inside, an ivory brocade bedspread, the floral carpet in heavy 'autumn tones'. And my painful swollen breasts. A baby, my baby, lay sweating in a basket on the bed, whimpering with hunger, exile.

Midday. Out from the cement laundry swinging buckets of baby clothes, soggy and smelly in spite of my rugged washing. Under the high sun bending and stretching until each sopping nappy was pegged along the line. With a shove of the wrist I shot the full side up in the air. A ritual in the hot noon sun.

Ugly words reverberating across Sunday empty streets. The wheels of the pram squeaked and rattled over the tar. The water I could see from my window never came near these streets — the only moisture the salty one of sweat and tears.

Harbor city. Where no water slaked my thirst.

And in the cool caves the sounds of male voices rose over the clunk of heavy glasses and the pulling of the beer. Great swilling machines handled by big women. The steady flush of the toilet off the creamtiled public bar.

No. I remember. It was Sunday. Even the voices had fled. Only their echo through the angry words. ... Somewhere on that Sunday I lost myself. Under that same china blue sky that held such promise.

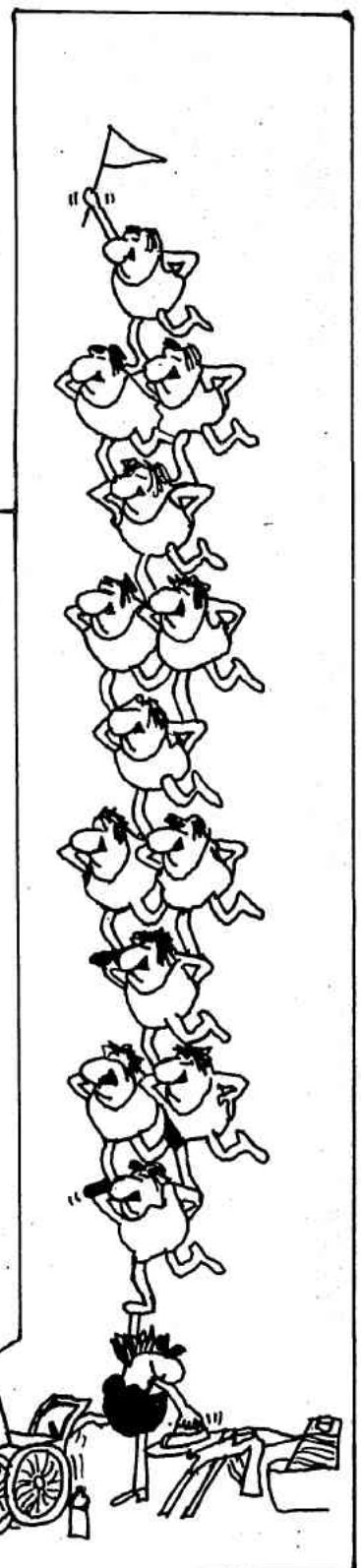
Dale Dowse.

FORMULA.

take a girl.
any girl.
fill her to the top
with diagrams for
walking talking seeing being.
shake well.
leave to simmer for 15 years.
then start the process
again: this time
it having more urgency
since the end object
is in sight.
make men appear the solution
and not the problem.
give her a set of weapons
with their own set of rules.
tell her,
now she's on her own:
every other woman
is an enemy,
useful only for
the occasional hint
she lets drop.
release her then.
you will have done
your work.
the rare escapee
will be disbelieved
by the others,
and will lack a ready-made
identity-kit.

Jill

**SMASH
SEXISM**



Published by Andrew McCredie:
Director of Student Publishing.

Printed by Maxwell Printing Co.

Put together by Jill, Helen, Jackie,
Jackie, Dee, Eva, Frances, Carol,
'Honey'. The token sex object
was MARTIN, and the number
one Male Chauvinist Pig was
Bill.

